

# The Miscommunication of Standardized Education

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Humans are born into a world of enlightenment, taught an abundant amount of previously formulated information, and learn based on the cultural values that surround them. We go through a rationally engineered system of schooling that begins with preschool (if you are so lucky to win the birth lottery), what we will identify for a moment as ‘*a*.’ Preschool is the beginning of acquiring the necessary skills to prepare for all social elements. The level of elementary (‘*b*’) schooling lays the background for the general information one will need, leading into middle school (‘*c*’), where true comprehension and culture are really settling in. Finishing one’s free education at high school (‘*d*’), with a deductive thought processes, provides a theoretical preparation for the final level. Impregnated deep within, because it is the key to success, we go to college (‘*e*’); at this stage, students will edify and show signs of erudition. After college the menial job is to be obtained (‘*f*’), most likely placing an hourly wage upon what a corporate structure values your worth. From sunrise to sunset, a chronological lifestyle is now set in motion. Most would not perceive life to be a simple algebraic equation. Although, as explained above, if you were to view life as  $a+b+c+d+e$ , you see how this equation equals the point in time when one’s life reaches the work force (‘*f*’). The explanation of life in such a systematic, linear format has been done for a specific reason. You, the audience member, are most likely educated. As for that reason alone, you can align with what has been established, as it (this) is written in the way you have been taught, and in the way you are supposed to think. The education system is a constructed product that was designed to prepare students for their upcoming future.

The future can be conceived in many ways, although it is unknown what will become of it. What is known: a healthy balance is certainly needed in all the aspects of the life we live. We live in a world where creation is just as vital as the knowledge of how creation works.

Ken Robinson conveys the importance between expressing creativity and teaching critical knowledge, although creative expression has been pushed to the back of priorities within the education system. The fast-paced lifestyle (anyone who lives in the present) leaves many technologies and theories in the dust; in opposition to this, creativity is timeless. So, how is it that a schooling system, that is in use, and is modeled from a time of the past, can be up to date? It cannot; as Michael Ellsberg wrote in the book, *The Education of Millionaires*: “Our current educational system is a typewriter (would you like a WI-FI connected laptop instead?)” (13).

I am interested in how the grading system in schools ineffectively communicates success. By grading system I am especially concerned with: one’s grade within a class, test (grading), paper (grading), GPA, along with report cards and transcripts. My focus in this project, then, will be on the validity of the grading system and the tactics employed in administering final class grades; as my main concern lies in the communication of these grades with the thought that some student’s academic achievement surpasses the assigned final grade. The amount of memorized (may not actually be understood) knowledge a student recalls for a given time period does not suggest that this student can apply what they have been taught to actual life. Although a common misconception in the reality of life tells us that the better the grades, the better the student, the better one will do in the work force. While the system that is in place may distribute what seems to be a fair conception of achievement, I displace the thought and deem it an ineffective summary tool.

The quality of a student is in the process of learning, understanding, and application. Within class every day, students should not be seen for their faults, but for their differences and how they can be most successful, not just in the schooling system but in their life. This should be the focus of our system, although I don’t see it, if it is. The goal of this paper, then, is to present

the beginning questions (see below, in the Appendix 1), arguments, and research that are undermining the purpose. Further evaluation and speculation will be needed. Not all degrees or schooling programs, for that matter, are to ever be considered the same. If a generic speculation is in focus when researching and working on the issue, there will be positions or key points that will be missed. It should be mentioned that some classes, test formats, or subject matters can or should be presented in the current standardized testing/grading system.

At the very beginning of this assignment, I began a log of questions (Appendix 1) that had no definitive answer. Every single question is to be considered open-ended and up for debate. In the study of communication, you learn to be aware and consider all that rhetoric applies to. By asking these questions, it will promote the thought process of what metacommunication revolves around: What could this be affecting? Metacommunication is the above all, the all encompassing act of communication; what one says or does, what a sign or symbol displays to and from. A metacommunicative act is to fully engross oneself in the message that is being sent and received, by breaking down all possible interpretations and truly exasperating the difference in positions. In regards to education, I believe the importance that is placed on standardized testing and standardized grading miscommunicates the quality of education a student has received. The goal of this paper is to bring awareness of the metacommunicative acts from our educational system in place, and how they are wrongly displacing the knowledge and wisdom a student can provide the world.

Learning and being prepared are the most interesting life objectives I can chase. Both of which take a balanced approach that must be well formulated and organized. What the education system has done, and the standardization, is what drew this interest to the top of the list; the struggles I have persevered through: never giving up, trying new systems of approach,

surrounding myself with those whom are successful, tutors, reading and voice recording, every chance at extra credit, talking with counselors, not being accepted (by schools, students, or even staff who think I am lazy), teachers and professors who feel like they have failed, losing financial aid, doctors and taking drugs to focus or fit in, receiving an “F” or “D” or even a “C” in classes that I am more than capable in, watching students memorize and regurgitate or cheat, bubbling in scantrons, has been my life for over 20 years. Depression as you can imagine has come and gone; and as I was so lucky to be born to a mother and father who told me “the only losers in this world are the quitters”, and asking me “what can you do?” In reply I would say, “I can do anything I set my mind to.”

The purpose of schooling has many reasons, and it is success in the outer world that promotes and drives our academic system. And, I contend, the constructs that have been quantitatively created (grading schemes) to present the brilliance or intelligence of a student (I fear) have set many students aside; Edward Hall defines intelligence as “paying attention to the right things” (87). The road to find one’s strengths and weaknesses is just one positive outcome for the persistence. The overall academic system is in place to help a student find their strengths and interests; we go through an entire system of schooling as one grade leads us to the next (preschool to kindergarten, elementary, middle, high school, junior college, and university). Throughout the entire structured process, their use of one formal grading scale— that I believe is unsuccessful and unproductive—places ground for pre-judgment on one’s intelligence. Standardized testing and standardized grading miscommunicates the quality of education a student has received. Standardization takes the quantitative remarks (grades or score) and creates/places a qualitative value on one’s education. In opposition to this claim, one may say that if the teacher is grading accordingly, *A*’s are earned, and provide an accurate depiction of

how much time was allocated to the subject matter by the student. Although in many instances students don't study (they might not even purchase the books), even if they do, by "studying the models that men create to explain nature tells you more about the men than about the part of nature being studied" (Hall 14). Many students have become professional test takers, or simply cheat to "achieve" their so-called earned grade. Multiple-choice exams are easy for some, and a struggle for others. If you are bad at multiple-choice exams the education system tries to teach you how to take one. Not to reconfigure the format of the test for success, but to psychologically teach you how to take—how to beat—the test even if you are drawing a blank and don't know the answer. Questions on such exams can be tricky, not clear, and there can be more than one answer. Too many times, the correct answer may be worded in a different way; and the test taker would be perceived to be wrong. Or choosing the best answer that fits is not apparent.

Qualities that are in favor of the standardized education grading system are important, but short lived. It is the fastest way possible to see where a student stands in their knowledge of the subject. A teacher can create a multiple-choice exam, re-use it, move questions around (to try and control cheating), and send it through a machine for grading. It is supposed to be "fair," in the way that there is no speculation of right versus wrong. Being based on a numerical point system, the quantitative scoring provides the qualitative perception. Transcripts and GPA offer a miniscule amount of information for quick review; perfect for anyone interested in how well the student has been, or is, doing.

By going to college, there is a perceived thought that the end result of obtaining a degree provides an education. It opens doors and creates a status symbol to those that achieve such academic levels. Additionally, this degree provides a perspective view to others, that you are one who completes what they start; you are able to set goals, priorities, deal with stressors, and have

an interest in a selected field. What the individual takes from the experiences of college and the achievement of obtaining a degree may vary, but a true accurate depiction of how well the student can apply the learned knowledge to real life situations can be misleading. The problematic concern of standardization in the academic system stems from the past; as the purpose and reason for learning (knowledge) is now to obtain the money making tool to which represents a status symbol, a degree.

### Historical Context

Students used to learn one subject from one teacher at a time, to ensure the quality of knowledge. The historical context of education is of interest and of utmost importance. Although this paper is not a historical piece on education, the foundation of any problem is to be the first place one should search for clues, as in why the education system has evolved into what it currently is. One's personality is built from the life experiences or culture(s) they encounter along the way. Let us go back in time to Protagoras, who was the individual always looking for the better way to do something; whether it was an invention, the first time someone was to perceive oration in another form, or to charge for his teachings. Many of the Sophists were not fond of Protagoras for the charging of his lectures (the first to do so). Within Plato's dialogue between Socrates and Protagoras, Protagoras states his argument: "Young man, if you associate with me, you shall, on the first day you enter my company, go home a better man for it, and so too on the next day; and every day you shall unfailingly improve..." (O'Brien 8). Protagoras, as a teacher, wanted his students to have a well-rounded personality, to view more than one side of an argument or the aspect of life. As a teacher, the lecture given would focus on one subject matter and students would continue to return; even though there was a well spoken of price (one hundred minas). I bring light to the stories of Protagoras because he was the first to charge for



his lessons. Although Protagoras did such, I question whether he knew that his intentions of making such a wealthy living would distort the evolution of academia. Was this was the point of origin where the education system anchored the thought of how much money knowledge is worth? The difference in opinion about whether an educator should or should not charge students created a residing frustration in those teaching for free -these educators not charging- it was about a belief within them to share such knowledge and make those around them wiser.

Known best for his teaching, Protagoras took what he taught his students and applied the knowledge to create and transcribe laws. In a meeting with Pericles, they “spent an entire day discussing – and perhaps debating – legal issues relevant to the case of a man who was killed by an athlete’s javelin” (Barrett 10). It was imperative for the two to understand who was at fault; time well spent, as a mutual friendship was created because of it. Soon after it was Protagoras who was called upon to write in the new laws for the new city of Thurii. Most importantly taken from here is that Protagoras discussed the issue at hand. Similar to today in a courtroom, time is well spent discussing and thinking in and out of every speculation. To think, not to regurgitate and circle in a bubble of choices: (a) Murder, (b) Accident, (c) I don’t know, (d) b & c. Learning is best achieved by practicing the knowledge in actual situations, a motto everyone from Cal Poly has heard and can align with, “Learn by doing”.

Different speculations are very healthy, and as we are considering the historical context of education we should remember that there are sometimes no definitive answer. “Protagoras was a sophist of very wide knowledge and a man of exceptional eloquence among the first inventors of rhetoric” (O’Brien 6). The one to establish sections of a speech, Protagoras “divided speech into four modes: entreaty, question, answer, and command...” Though there is stipulation that seven were also recognized: “narration, question, answer, command, report, entreaty, and

invitation” (O’Brien 5). Organization was extremely important, and if you were going to try to twist an argument, one must be prepared, and to think before they speak. A voiced difference of opinion brings new thought process to a problem, and while taking a multiple-choice test offers different choices, the test taker can find themselves researching within how or why one answer may be more relevant than the other. “For every idea, there is a corresponding contrary idea” (Murphy 38); in every aspect of Protagoras’s doctrines, the purpose of studying and being able to argue both sides of an argument are apparent. While some perceive him as being vague, creating eristic moments, or even contradictory, his basic values of rhetoric all served the purpose of being able to see both sides of an argument. This dedication led him to be in control of conversation, and persuade those that didn’t want to see the point of view. “A rhetorician can reasonably be expected to be able to make up a case both for and against any given subject” (Rankin 35). Understanding further, the “ ‘Protagoras’ metron doctrine, both may be regarded as representing truth, but there is the expectation that only one will win, even if that is a matter of the lesser argument prevailing over the stronger.” In taking classes such as classical rhetoric, persuasion, and forensic activity, students learn to not look for the best argument; you are to make the argument that is better than one’s opponent, and win. For example, just as the claims made here in this paper, both sides have been presented. A better argument for opposing standardized testing is stated here using the Socratic method: How can one reproduce learned knowledge by sitting, face down, not talking, filling in bubbles, and in a selected time choose the supposed answer that is in front of you? Where is the brain stimulation? Edward Hall formulates an argument saying “it is not man who is crazy so much as his institutions and those culture patterns that determine his behavior... We live fragmented, compartmentalized lives in which contradictions are carefully sealed off from each other” (Hall 11).

Many of Protagoras's writings have been lost, or destroyed, and so just fragments remain. The most recognized is known by many names: the 'Man-Measure,' Protagoras' Dictum, "*Aletheia* (Truth) or *Kataballontes Logoi* (The Knock-down Arguments)" (Rankin 32). "Man is the Measure of all things; of the things that are, that they are; of the things that are not, that they are not" (Rankin 32). The statement may seem confusing the first time you read it, as it establishes controversy. Protagoras wanted mankind to understand that everyone views and perceives the world differently, and that our personal beliefs stem from the environmental background we are born in and live in. If we adopt the thought process of how everyone views and perceives the world differently, how can a standardized test, with multiple correct answers, not seem confusing?

Was Protagoras wrong to charge for his teaching? He created a business, although it does bring questioning to the staggering amount of money he made, and how it just might have evolved into jealousy of others. Leading to further questioning of our current education system (knowing it is a business), a series of questions emerges. Is the focus on money and time too concentrated? Is there anything wrong with online education? What is your insight on the semester versus quarter system? Students are taking prescribed drugs to force concentration; is that right?

### Exigency

The notion that time is money, that it's what is best for efficiency, plays a role in the education system. The time culture in the United States is a monochronic society that promotes the factors of multitasking and a quantitative framework of speed (efficiency of time or time efficiency) hinders the qualitative output of the sender or the qualitative input of the receiver. A

monochronic society concerning time efficiency is a culture that places a large value on time ordinance (Hall 20). Think of it this way, when students get bad grades (on a test or in a class), what are the overall effects? The possibilities are endless: frustration, loss of scholarship or eligibility for sports, price of insurance or anything that gives a good student discount, even a sense of wasted time. When a bad grade is received, and permanently marked down in the records, and all it relays is F, D, C, B, or anything except for an A, the negative stigma is placed on the student (it can also look bad for the teacher) and carried with the transcript. For he or she did not get the highest grade possible. A question must be posed: does the viewer of the grade (not being the student) ask why the receiver of the grade did not get an A? For example, when *student x* applies to a job and the company asks for a copy of his transcripts—if the GPA does not meet their criteria—will they give him a chance to state a claim of why he is still fit for the job? Most likely not, because it isn't time effective with dozens, hundreds, possibly even thousands of resumes and applications to sort through, it is not a good use of the company's time.

Everything can be factored and compared to time; and as time is the most precious, delicate, commodity we have, it is in constant scrutiny. Time is a quantitative construct that we rationalize the amount, the worth, and the number of quality elements one can exchange in their favor. Whether it was an economics class, anthropology class, communication and/or technology course(s), the list goes on and on, every single subject touched base at some point on two key features. One being time, the second of which is decision making.

The Center for Public Education (CPE), along with the National School Board Association (NSBA) released a slide format presentation in 2006 titled “High Stakes Testing and Instruction.” Whether it was released to the public, select counties or school districts is unknown, although it is apparent that the presentation is directed towards the teachers, leaders, and school district. The

presentation provides arguments for both why high-stakes tests are good and bad; it seems to be a fair analysis of where the education system stood in the success rate to students. Until a close analysis of each individual slide is viewed, a biased stylistic writing form conveys an underlying theme of how high-stakes testing is headed in the right direction for anyone but the student.

The second slide prepares the audience for the presentation, pertaining to three questions: (1) “How are high-stakes tests affecting instruction?,” (2) “How does instruction affect test scores on high-stakes test?,” and (3) “Can school leaders make sure students are well prepared AND produce high scores?” (Barth) With questions such as these, there is confusion about the goal of the CPE and NSBA. Their questions and main concern are viewed to have good intentions on how well the quantitative academic scores stack up; but none of the questions directly relate to questioning the quality of the education a student has obtained. The *purpose* for testing is to analyze how well the students comprehend the information; which is much different from, the *reason* for testing, which will be explained below. The third question (even though it mentions ‘students’) is the worst of them all. They begin the two-part question by starting with a negative stigma towards school leaders (who do they consider the school leaders?) saying “*Can* school leaders make sure students are well prepared” (Barth)... Part two of the question brings another interest in the production not of a quality student, but of a high score. For the *reason* testing is different than the *purpose* lies here, students in academic testing must achieve a high score on tests. This is of utmost importance because it directly relates to funding; as government funding (help) isn’t going to go to a student or school who produces a poor scoring student.

In slide 14, Ruth Mitchell is quoted as saying, “Experts on both sides agree that accountability systems and the tests on which they depend are in their infancy and will need a great deal of refinement as they develop” (Barth). What the slides don’t provide is

Ruth Mitchell's testimony in quotes or any form of citations from where they got their information. Tracing the presentation back to the CPE website provides more information regarding the comparisons of multiple studies and more conviction for both how education is headed in the right direction. Following the trail of breadcrumbs leads to a text written by Ruth Mitchell and Patte Barth, "How Teacher Licensing Tests Fall Short." Not completely off topic, and definitely of interest, it informs the reader about the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and the National Evaluation Systems (NES). NES is the creator of the state-specific exam, called the Praxis examinations, and ETS is the distributor for the Praxis exams; these are three series of exams (math, reading, and writing) that the majority of universities require their students to pass, to become a teacher. The Mitchell and Barth text is published under ERIC, fully titled "Not Good Enough: A Content Analysis of Teacher Licensing Examination. How Teacher Licensing Tests Fall Short." The two programs (ETS and NES), the authors say, "investigate the approximate grade level of the test (Praxis series), how challenging the test questions were, and whether the knowledge was relevant to teaching. Results found that the ETS series of essay examinations, which requires candidates to demonstrate their depth of knowledge, is a good measure of teachers' skills. However, this series is required by far fewer states than is the lower level multiple-choice examination" (Barth, Mitchell). Compacting the results into blatant terms, the exam style that asks the students to discuss and convey their knowledge is a far more superior examination style than that of multiple-choice testing format. If the best teachers are to be chosen, then we should not give them a multiple-choice exam. As said earlier, the best way to learn something is to teach it, discuss it, and learn by doing.

Flaws of the education system are a formidable and delicate issue. Reforming education is not to be taken lightly, and a change is needed to be made. A developed understanding of the

current model in its congruent technological and creative time frame must be provoked.

Students of today (and the future) need to be stimulated more than what is considered to be current standards. Sir Ken Robinson is known to be a creative thinker who presses for this educational reform. In three different symposium presentations, Robinson establishes the need for a learning revolution, not evolution.

Children are brought up in a world of knowledge. Their education is at the forefront of what students are told success is created through. It is communicated to them that one's ability to stay focused, do well in school, go to college and earn a degree will give you a success story. It is imperative, then, to provide the information that shows how the standardized, linear model for a student's success is outdated; that the importance of conformity and standardization is at its highest point; although it should be given the least amount of attention. The main concern and interest is to be focused towards effective teaching and learning styles. Disorders are seen as a student's problem, but they shouldn't. They are a construction for the systematic process of learning, which has imbedded itself in students across the world. This creation has given the concrete education system a reason to not change its ways. Therefore, the first place for change is to be directed towards the point of origin. Creating awareness will identify the locations interested in making a change.

All educators must learn that there are students with different styles of learning. It is widely known that these differences are visible, although rarely is something mentioned or shifted towards the student to help them obtain their greatest capabilities. Students spend more time in the learning atmosphere with educators than with their own guardians. So it is that we look to the educators to find hidden talents, and provide informational knowledge, in order to create the highest qualitative student (not a quantitative student). Edward T. Hall writes in his

book “Beyond Culture” about talents, by presenting his audience with the problem of human disaster; saying that the “answer lies not in restricting human endeavors, but in evolving new alternatives, new possibilities, new dimensions, new options, and new avenues for creative uses of human beings based on the recognition of the multiple and unusual talents so manifest in the diversity of the human race” (Hall 3). Hall then proposes a two piece question of thought, asking why it is that we are so hard on ourselves, and why doesn’t the world make better use of our natural talents. The answer that is provided “lies in the tension between creativeness and diversity and the rather specific limiting needs of institutions” (Hall 5).

Students are not the only ones hurting in this flawed education system; everyone is affected by it. If money is to be an important asset to the education system then the inexplicable amount of money that working educators receive for how much they go through is not producing the best outcomes. An employee who feels devalued should be nowhere near the minds of those interested in exploring the unknown. Humans have created amazing communicative constructions such as money and business structures. So there is no reason why these establishments should not be more effective. No wonder teachers use the multiple-choice-testing formats, if they were to educate students the way I perceive the system should be set up, they would be working almost double the amount, for half the amount of pay. The current full time job of a professor at a university, specifically regarding in a communications department, in the United States of America is expected to make (a median annual) less than \$85, 926 (salary.com) a year. Not to mention that our professors at Cal Poly have to purchase a parking pass! I know there are a lot of stipulations such as the experience an educator has; so I propose the question, what is an education worth? Is it priceless? Why are professors living in little condos, renting,



driving cars of less worth than the student who drive to learn from them, and not being given the ample amount of respect regarding what they are doing?

The worth of education is what humans are relying upon to continue our exponential growth. Acquiring knowledge is only part of success; creativity and the ability to not be fearful of making mistakes (and growing from them) is, really, the purpose. More than ever, humans are living in a compounded situational world. Above all, students are crammed into this new-age world of stimulation, and then hindered through an archaic system of education. What functions does Ken Robinson's discourse on educational flaws propose in the three highly viewed *TED* presentations?

Through the organization *TED* (which stands for Technology, Education, and Design), Robinson is able to reach millions of viewers, some of whom are willing to travel great distances, and pay huge money, so they can sit in as a live audience member. It is an experience that has been expressed by a critic as "a true meritocracy for earning social favor" (quora.com). Brilliant minds go to provide creative insight on a subject they have chosen to speak about at a *TED* Talk presentation; all the while, audience members and video (or audio) streaming viewers are exposing themselves to great new ways of finding creativity and inspiration. There is great significance to Ken Robinson's lectures (titled) *How school kills creativity*, *Bring(ing) on the learning revolution* and *Changing Education Paradigms*. The purpose of his presentations is to establish the awareness of a problem, by bringing forth a suggestion in solving the problem, and to justify what the act's goal is.

I will showcase a narrative analysis of Ken Robinson's interest in the flaws of our education system by stating the purpose, examining the key elements, and establishing a theme between his objectives and features presented. By using the narrative criticism form to guide my

analysis, I will distinctly present the strategies used to accomplish the goal of his discourse.

However, as I was not a live audience member and am viewing the lectures through mediation, an audience therefore analysis will not be fully developed. As a positive note, I have the ability to view each lecture more than just once, since all three are available for free viewing provided and posted by *TED* on YouTube.

Following Walter Fisher's arguments in his essay "Narration as Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument" (Burghardt 289), I will present the commensurable connections between the rational world paradigm and the narrative paradigm, where the prior will assist the latter. Robinson is surely presenting the purposeful reasoning in a persuasive argument, as the flaws within the education system are a logical problem. He then rationalizes through stories and good reason, which are backed by the current and historical education system still in use. Finally, his presentation of coherence and fidelity will be brought forth in his interest of creating a worldly view, in that all viewers can make the decision themselves regarding whether or not his objectives are good and of similar moral interest.

*How school kills creativity* is the first lecture point mentioned; this was a visual presentation of Robinson speaking to a live audience at a *TED Talks* convention. *How school kills creativity* is one of the number one watched *TED* talks. With an astounding 30-plus-million views, this nineteen minute lecture, recorded in February of 2006, was the first of three lectures Robinson presented. Within the first moments of the lecture, Robinson captivates the live audience with the story of a child that doesn't commonly pay attention, until one day the teacher recognizes the child's interest in a drawing lesson. Excited to see the student so involved, the educator asked, "what are you drawing?" With a relaxed reply, the child says God. In reply, the teacher says that "no one knows what God looks like..." and child says, "they will in a moment."

Robinson established the thought to not undermine a child's creativity, defining creativity as "the process of having original ideas that have value". Second to creativity, he alliteratively expresses the three fundamentals of intelligence: diverse, dynamic, and distinct. He concludes his presentation with a quote of anticipation, stating, "only hope for the future is to adopt a new conception of human ecology, one in which we start to reconstitute our conception of the richness of human capacity" (Robinson).

In February of 2010, Ken spoke again to the audience attending the *Ted* symposium. This time titling his piece, "Bring on the Learning Revolution." As this is even mentioned in his presentation, it was the follow up from his first (as mentioned prior) lecture. The learning revolution presents an extreme change in how the system is currently operating; shifting from the linear or standardized model to a more personalized, organic schooling system. The key terms that are the common denominators mentioned were consistent to those that had been used in the other two lectures, such as: talent a student might not have found, creativity the student has and an educator should keep a close eye on, reforming an education system, and a linear model that is out of date. Mechanized or industrial style education models are profoundly outdated, claims Robinson. He proposes an answer for a systemic revolution, by "customizing to your circumstances and personalizing education, to the people you are actually teaching" (Robinson).

The third presentation, "Changing Education Paradigms," is a narrated vocal animation depicted on a white board with only two colors in use (orange and black). The recorded date is from October of 2010, while the video currently has over 1.5 million views. The storyline expresses his vocal thoughts into a collaboration of in-time-motion sketches. Everything from the historical context to the causation of why the education system is flawed is portrayed in the camera view. With the constant movement of the camera, the screen depicts what the audience

can see. In other words, it continuously pans in and out and across, to provide a selected view for what is currently being spoken about.

“Changing Education Paradigms” posits three main concepts of causation, which in turn provoke the need to make a change. First is the amount of student failure and dropout rates; this should concern everyone because students should not want to. If a child is falling behind, letting them drop out of school is not the answer. “Any school child who has struggled to make sense of what he is taught knows that some fit reasonably well, other don’t” (Hall 13). Next, how the system has placed any subject related to the arts too far down the priority list, and how the natural talents aligned with the arts programs are not as important. “We can all benefit from a deeper knowledge of what an incredible organism we really are... To do so, however, we must stop ranking both people and talents and accept the fact that there are many roads to truth and no culture has a corner on the path or is better equipped than others to search for it” (Hall 7). The last troublesome concept establishes his interest in the construction of ADHD. Two key (opposing) terms were inserted towards the end of the presentation. An aesthetic experience is explained to be “when your senses are operating at their peak,” says Robinson. He goes on to explain the reverse of this, which is an anesthetic experience expressing that this “is what we are doing to get the kids through school. It is the shutting off of the senses.” With the extreme amount of information, in such a short time frame, and the senses shutting off, all the system is achieving is a stressed student who has been subjected to information overload. “Information overload is a technical term applied to information-processing systems. It describes a situation in which the system breaks down when it cannot properly handle the huge volume of information to which it is subjected” (Hall 85).

Ken Robinson then brings forth the perception of “How Schools Kill Creativity” by encouraging a “learning revolution,” which he justifies in his discourse by informing the audience about changes to be made in the “education paradigms.” The persuasive techniques of the narrative are seen throughout the three common lectures; in view of the time frame in which his discourses were released (intentionally or not), formally said, the linkage in causal relations perpetuate the same non-obtrusive persuasive techniques. In other words, he is honest about the reasons and interest in driving the argument. Robinson isn’t looking for a fight, or even a heated argument, he is very calm, but passionate. I’m not sure if Robinson planned for the popularity of his presentations, but the likeability format of each performance begins with a problem, then there is a suggestion, and finally a justification for why it is an issue. Logically the first lecture is dedicated to the problem at hand, the second is merely suggesting a change or learning revolution, and now seeing the pattern within his objective’s identifies how the final lecture, I find that the most persuasive, “Changing Education Paradigms,” is the justification to his persuasive form. The build up of watching one lecture to the next versus individually, adds great strength to Robinsons character, and instills in the audience how a academic revolution will happen, by changing education paradigms.

The key features of the narrative are presented through stories and good reasoning. Seeing and hearing the rationality of the flawed education system from stories and good reason power the discourse into suggesting how the historical system still in use today is what continues our perpetual motion in the wrong direction. Ultimately, as established in the second lecture, the notion is that we must start fresh; in Robinson’s own words, he states that it is “not an evolution in education but a revolution in education” (Robinson) that we need.

I found the connections between the three narratives to be seamless, so it is interesting to contemplate some of the reasons the first lecture has been viewed more than the latter two. It did come out a lot earlier, but I would presume that, if you have seen the first, and related to it, you would follow up with the next. As this may be the case, I haven't fully analyzed the viewing data patterns, and there may be a correlation of others who do not align with the objectives.

The three events in the narrative analysis proposed here are all specifically dedicated to the flaws of the education system with the goal of persuading the audience in how a change is to be viewed and made. Robinson establishes that there is a problem, regarding the perception of "How Schools Kill Creativity". By encouraging a "learning revolution" to solve the many problems within the education system, he justifies his discourse by informing the audience about changes to be made in the "education paradigms."

I uncovered in the analysis how notable it is for someone to speak out against the current standards of education; especially to an audience of educated upper-class individuals, as they are constantly trying to contribute to the bettering of education. Furthermore, the narratives have received the utmost respect from those who are also currently teaching. One of the conceptions I perceive most students to have of poor scores is: (a) the time and effort spent should have resulted in a better grade, (b) the teacher's lecturing style and the students learning style did not mesh (quite possibly will be linked to likeability), (c) the student's lack of communication apprehension, and (d) a possible misinterpretation of what a grade means or entails.

Even when a student does not receive good scores on a standardized test or within a class, it is interesting to note that if the student took a liking to the educator, the student and teacher tries harder. As mentioned in point (b), the opposite can have an extremely negative effect on test or overall class scores. Further interest in the assessment of this research led to a section in a

communication studies publication from 2011 titled “The Relationship between Self- and Other-Perceptions of Communication Competence and Friendship Quality.” The study conducted focused on same-sex undergraduate students and required them to recruit a friend. Setting aside the differences between the study and what is at hand, it is the similarities in the study that are copacetic. Both take place in an academic atmosphere where students and educators can be of the same sex and quite often form a semi-platonic relationship. The study looked into “their own and their partner’s communication competence as well as their relationship satisfaction and commitment” (Arroyo & Segrin 547). The findings establish that a “higher self-perception of communication competence [is] associated with higher levels of satisfaction and commitment” (Arroyo & Segrin 551) was confirmed. RQ1 tested the partners’ communication competence and quality, such that those of different levels would be dissatisfied and those with “similar levels of competence” (Arroyo & Segrin 551) will experience higher likeability. Now, regarding a same-sex teacher-student, platonic relationship, we can understand if the teacher is the actor in the study, and has “high levels of self-rated social skills... [which] are associated with high levels of satisfaction and commitment, regardless of the partner’s level of self-rated social skills” (Arroyo & Segrin 556). We thus confirm that a relationship bond of educator and student can create a stronger opportunity for extra help or guidance.

In the *Educational Horizons* magazine, an article titled “The Dissolution of Education Knowledge” dives into the educational politics of available material regarding research literature and how it is either biased, inaccurate, or kept from being released. The author, Richard P. Phelps, says that his interest in such a topic stems from first-hand knowledge of an exorbitant amount of information (with a Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania, and a list of other degrees backing him). Secondly, this information is being withheld, and that it is the most

“important current topic in education” (232). Such is the case with the “research literature regarding the effects of standardized testing on achievement. Given the implementation of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, one might reasonably assume that the research literature on the effects of standardized testing would have been exposed, made widely familiar, and meticulously analyzed in the early 2000s. But, just the opposite happened” (233). Phelps has surrounded himself with education and an interest in advocating awareness of the fallacies of standardized testing. His website has a detailed list of all that he has accomplished in the educational form.

For his part, the poet T.S. Eliot proposes, in the poem “The Rock,” his thoughts and message to the world about wisdom, knowledge and information, and it applies directly to the main themes of this paper. Eliot is very specific in his interest in wisdom as he writes:

“The endless cycle of idea and action,  
 Endless invention, endless experiment,  
 Brings knowledge of motion, but not of stillness;  
 Knowledge of speech, but not of silence;  
 Knowledge of words, and ignorance of the Word.  
 All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,  
 All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,  
 But nearness to death no nearer to GOD.  
 Where is the Life we have lost in living?  
 Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?  
 Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?”

(Wisdomportal.com)



As time moves forward, even though it is a constant, quantitative construct, it speeds up. We are beings of the world that want to know answers and understand. But the wealth of information has begun to hinder our thought process; whereas wisdom has taught knowledge, and knowledge has informed the unknowing. The quality of a student is in the process of learning, understanding, and application. Within class every day, students should not be seen for their faults, but for their differences and for how they can be most successful, not just in the schooling system but in their life. This should be the focus of our system, although I don't see it, if it is.

The proposed interest I have in academia and grading revolves around the grading scale barriers that have remained a struggle. In researching such a specific area, I have considered four key components to understand. First, I have sought to grapple with the *evolution* of the system, focusing on how and when the creation of the academic grading system was implemented; then how long the current *a, b, c, d, f* (as laid out at the outset of this project) method has been in place. Second, I have considered *who is involved* with what grades are projecting to different people, such as parents, teachers, and the work force; as well as, how those projections can hinder those with different thought processes, possibly even helping those who get good grades and congruently hurting them in the long run because they memorized the information instead of understanding it. Really questioning, who is using a different system and if it is working. Third, I have considered the *goal* of who is involved, which includes: the government, teachers and professors, parents and students, and the work force. This is better explained as, what "they" want to achieve by students going to school versus what students want to achieve through education. The final key component of what I wanted to understand is if a *change* is appropriate, and what could be done differently and why hasn't it been changed.

After one's first professional job (out of college), it is not the academic grading, performance, or success that is most pertinent. After college it is the cultured experiences that we take with us from one job to the next, not commonly one's academic success. There is a large amount of information directed towards what is best for the majority, and how the current academic grading rubric is what is best because of it being a qualitative guide to a student's success. The current understanding for grades proposes the ability, to clearly establish a student's success to the layperson(s). The purpose of schooling and learning is to obtain knowledge and apply such to become a success. The purpose of this paper is to bring light to a quantitative system, with an interest in moving it to a qualitative format. "A common fault of teachers and professors is that they pay more attention to their subject matter than they do to their students, who frequently pay too much attention to the professor and not enough to the subject" (Hall 88). "According to some of the most distinguished and thoughtful students of the mind, perhaps the most devastating and damaging thing that can happen to someone is to fail to fulfill his potential" (Hall 5). The effects of our grading system should not keep students from becoming a success in any manner. While the system that is in place may distribute what seems to be a fair conception of achievement, I displace the thought and deem it an ineffective summary tool. The quality of a student is in the process of learning, understanding, and application.

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## Appendix 1

- What does the Meta communicative act of transcripts or GPA relay?
- What is the goal? For who? From who's perspective?
- What is best for the student?
- What is good for the outer perspective?
- Does the standardized system want what is best for the: Students? Teachers? Workforce? Future?
- Do jobs look at a student's transcripts? Surely it varies from job to job, what about from position to position?
- What specifically do jobs look at?
  - Grades in certain types of classes?
  - GPA?
  - Test scores?
- If they don't look at academic scores, why not?
  - Shouldn't they?
  - What is the purpose if they don't?
  - Doesn't that devalue the education system?
- Time:
  - Is there too much information to be understood?
  - Is the time to coast ratio an issue?
- Do we learn by doing? Or do we learn by memorizing?
- How does curving help, hinder, or manipulate one's grade?
- Does the current system create a false conception of how capable, smart, intelligent the student is?
- Who is at fault?
  - What are the levels of causation?